



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ASTOR LIBRARY TREASURES

THE Astor Library, says the *Evening Sun* of this city, has one of the finest collections of rare and curious volumes in America. The gems of the library are an exhibit in large glass show cases in the main hall of the reading room. The gem of the galaxy of rare books which fill the cases is, perhaps, the second Bible printed. It is dated 1462, and is the first edition of the Bible ever printed with a date. It is in two volumes folio. The leaves are vellum. It is the noblest work of the Faust and Schoffer's press. The initial letters of the chapters are beautifully illuminated. The two volumes are worth \$15,000. There is one of the eight copies known to be extant of Wycliff's translation of the New Testament, in manuscript—so closely resembling black letter type that it deceives even a practiced eye. It is enriched with illuminated capitals, and its supposed date is 1390. It contains the autograph of the famous "good Duke Humphrey."

Other books are an Ethiopic manuscript on vellum, the service book of an Abyssinian convent at Jerusalem; two richly illuminated Persian manuscripts on vellum, which once belonged to the library of the Mogul emperors of Delhi; two exquisitely illuminated missals, or books of hours, the gift of the late Mr. John Jacob Astor. One of the glories of the collection is the splendid Salisbury missal, written with wonderful skill and profusely emblazoned with burnished gold. Another is a magnificent manuscript, written in liquid gold on purple vellum, entitled, "Evangelistarium." It is not only of unrivaled beauty, but is remarkable on account of its great age, the date being 870 A. D. This is probably the oldest book in America.

Perhaps the most interesting of the rare books just now is the celebrated letter written by Columbus announcing the discovery of America. When Columbus set sail on his memorable voyage he commenced a journal, intended for the inspection of the Spanish sovereigns. It opens with a stately prologue, in which he refers to the motives and aims which led to his expedition. He proposed to keep this record, as he said, after the manner of Cæsar's Commentaries. On his return to Spain on his first voyage Columbus, while on board of his ship, wrote two letters in Spanish. One was addressed to Luis de Santangel, the Crown Treasurer of Spain. It was translated into the then current court language, Latin, and printed.

Its publication created a profound sensation throughout Europe. Six editions were exhausted during the first year after its appearance. It has been said that there are but four perfect copies of this first letter in existence. A copy is worth at least \$5,000 now. The one in the Astor library is a very choice copy, and it was the gift of William Waldorf Astor.

The little relic consists of only four small leaves, or eight pages, printed in Latin from Gothic type.

The Astor library contains a copy of the first folio edition of Shakespeare, so highly prized by collectors. Its title page reads as follows: "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, Published According to the True Originall Copies: London, 1623." There is a well-executed copper engraving of Shakespeare on the title page, and facing this are the lines:

This figure th t thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut,
Wherein the graver had a strife
With Nature to out-doo the Life.
O, could he but have drawn his wit
As well in Brasse as he hath hit
His face: the Print would then surpasse
All that was ever writ in Brasse.
But since he cannot, Reader, looke,
Not on his picture, but his booke. B. I.

There is also the rare second edition of Shakespeare's plays, printed in London in 1632, and the still rarer fourth folio edition, printed in 1685, in which the play of "Pericles" is introduced for the first time, together with six other plays, since deemed apocryphal. Their titles are: "The London Prodigal"; "The History of Thomas Lord Cromwell"; "Sir John Oldcastle"; "Lord Cobham"; "The Puritan Widow, a Yorkshire Tragedy," and "The Tragedy of Locrine."

A quaint volume is Eliot's Indian Bible, printed at Cambridge in 1661. It is in the dialect of the Mohegans, whose tongue was spoken by the Indians of New England. The last person who could speak or understand the language died more than a century ago. It is printed in Roman characters, but the words are slightly longer than those of our day. The word for Bible in the Mohegan tongue is "Nuppoquohwussuaeneumun," according to the Rev. Mr. Eliot's book. The folio geography of Ptolemæus, printed in 1508, which is in one of the glass cases, has the first attempt at an

engraved map of America, which is called "Mundus Novus." Other books of interest to Americans particularly are "The Four Voyages of Vespuccius," printed at Strasburg in 1509, and the Justinian Polyglot Psalter, printed in 1516. The latter is remarkable for containing a note to the fourth verse of Psalm xix, referring to the discovery of America.

Among the numerous rare editions of the Bible may be mentioned the magnificent folio printed in 1665, with a binding by Grolier, and the Polyglot Bible in six folio volumes, printed in 1514, bound in purple morocco, with extra gilt edges. Perhaps the most interesting of the early Bibles in the collection is the first printed edition of the Bible in the English language. It was printed in black letter in Antwerp by Jacob von Keteren in 1535. It is very rare and is valued at about \$2,500 by book collectors. Tyndale's Pentateuch in English was printed five years before the Antwerp edition of the Bible. It is so rare that but six imperfect copies are in existence. The Astor library's copy is one of the most perfect of these, and only lacks the first of the five quarto volumes in which it is printed. The four volumes are worth in the neighborhood of \$2,000. One of the most valuable of the Bibles is that printed by G. Zanier at Augsburg, in two volumes folio, dated 1477. This is the first German Bible with a date. The first page of each volume is beautifully illuminated in gold and colors, with capital letters colored by hand. It is worth \$3,000.

Another rare religious work is the Catholicon of Balbi de Joannis, the fourth printed book with a date. It was published in 1460, and its cover has beautiful gold designs by the celebrated binder, Robert Payne. It would bring at least \$3,000 at an auction. This famous edition of the Catholicon has always been considered one of the indispensables in a collection of the theological works of the fifteenth century, but its excessive rarity places it beyond the reach of any but the longest purses. The third book printed with a date is also in this collection. It is the "Durandi Rationale Divinorum Officiorum," printed on vellum, in 1459. It is very rare.

There is a curious Siamese manuscript of unknown date in one of the cases. It is called "Nung Sue-Rah Ma Her-in." It is a historical romance, printed in gold on black paper. Another Siamese manuscript is the "Sacred Book of Omens," a sort of Buddhistic fortune-teller, with symbolic figures beautifully painted in colors.

DÜRER'S "ADAM AND EVE"

Editor of THE COLLECTOR:

SIR: Your issue of August 15th contains an article on Dürer by H. F. S., a paragraph of which requires notice. I refer to the comments on the "Adam and Eve," which was disposed of lately in London at the Fisher sale.

I was in London at the time of the sale and saw the print there. I afterwards saw it in Berlin, along with the four or five impressions of the first and second states of the plate, already in the museum, and found it to be far superior to any of them.

It is in the first state with the ox-head mark, has a large margin, is in perfect condition and of great richness and beauty of impression. In fact, it was considered by connoisseurs who were at the sale in London as one of the finest and most perfect impressions in existence, and had it not been of this exceptional quality the Berlin Museum would not have given the very high price of £410 for it.

From time to time, attention is called to the high prices at which such and such prints are sold. It may be taken for granted, that if a print fetches an unusual price, its quality is unusual.

H. F. S. mentions the two trial proofs of the "Adam and Eve" which are in the Albertina in Vienna. There is also one in the British Museum, which was purchased in 1837 at the Otley sale for £36.

It is a pity that some public-spirited citizen or citizens do not buy the excellent and comprehensive collection alluded to by your correspondent and present it to the Metropolitan Museum, which has absolutely no prints in its possession. This is a state of affairs which is a disgrace to the country. E.

M. de Saint Amand's series of volumes dealing with the "Famous Women of the French Court," has had a remarkable success. It is understood that over seventy-seven thousand copies of the volumes already issued have been sold—this sale probably including both original and translations. The next volumes are to be devoted to the Duchess of Berry. They are "The Duchess of Berry and the Court of Louis XVIII;" "The Duchess of Berry and the Court of Charles X;" and "The Duchess of Berry and the Revolution of July, 1830." The extra-illustrating bookmen have had much pleasure out of these works, which can readily be padded out with portraits and other cuts.